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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 000046

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/FO, AF/SPG, AF/RSA AND AF/E.

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/06/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [SU](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: AU COMMISSION FEARS A BASHIR CHAIRMANSHIP,
SUGGESTS HIGH-LEVEL CALLS

REF: A. 04 STATE 226663

[1](#)B. STATE 1351

[1](#)C. ADDIS ABABA 4223

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. VICKI HUDDLESTON. REASON: 1.4 (B)
AND (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The African Union (AU) Commission believes there is a "high risk" that Sudanese President Bashir will win AU Assembly chairmanship, Deputy Chairperson Patrick Mazimhaka told Charge January 6. Mazimhaka (protect) urged high level calls to key African heads of state to encourage that they proactively oppose a Bashir chairmanship in order to preserve AU credibility. End summary.

DESPITE AU BEST EFFORTS, BASHIR MAY WELL PREVAIL

[1](#)2. (C) Mazimhaka said that AU Commission Chairperson Konare had told Bashir that a Sudanese chairmanship of the AU Assembly would be "disastrous" at this stage given slow progress in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and lack of sufficient positive and concrete Sudanese government action on Darfur.

[1](#)3. (C) Despite Konare's best efforts, Mazimhaka noted, Bashir remains unconvinced and even dispatched an envoy to the AU and several African countries to advocate a Bashir chairmanship. The Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs assesses that "all of East Africa" is behind Bashir, Mazimhaka said. Mazimhaka noted that a meeting of Central African states called by Chad on January 5 failed to issue a declaration opposing a Bashir chairmanship. Mazimhaka speculated that Central Africa does not want to rock the boat since Congo-Brazzaville President Sassou-Nguesso is the only other clear contender for the Assembly chairmanship.

[1](#)4. (C) Mazimhaka concluded that there is a "high risk" that Bashir will be endorsed at the closed session of heads of state at the Khartoum AU Summit January 23. Mazimhaka believes that those heads of state who do not want to explicitly endorse Bashir will not attend the Summit and instead deploy Foreign Ministers. A Bashir chairmanship will mean a "dead year" for the AU in terms of ability to promote a positive agenda for the continent, Mazimhaka lamented.

[1](#)5. (C) Note: DCM's separate meeting with Cameroon Ambassador (and PSC Chairman) Jean Hilaire Mbea Mbea seems to confirm member state inaction on the issue of Bashir assuming the chairmanship. Mbea said that African leaders will be reluctant to not grant the Summit host chairmanship, and

those leaders firmly opposed to a Bashir chairmanship will simply not attend the Summit. While conceding that Sudan faces difficult domestic challenges and that the international community would find it hard to deal with Bashir, he was not convinced that Sudan would necessarily be less able than Obasanjo to promote African agendas. Mbea commented that it could be preferable to keep Sudan in the fold and promote positive change in Sudan through a Sudanese chairmanship. DCM noted that AU Chairmanship is an issue of credibility for the continent and commented that Bashir does not deserve a position of authority and prominence at this stage. End note.

ENCOURAGE AFRICAN LEADERSHIP TO PRESERVE AU CREDIBILITY

¶16. (C) Charge noted that the USG shares AU Commission concern that a Bashir presidency would damage AU credibility. She asked Mazimhaka for ideas on how to ensure Bashir does not win the Assembly chairmanship. Mazimhaka (protect) said that only high-level outreach to key countries such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Africa, Botswana, Algeria and Ghana has a chance of success. Mazimhaka said that international partners should strongly encourage these leaders to attend the Summit and to vote against Bashir. (Note: Mazimhaka clarified that he has no information to indicate that these leaders do not intend to go to the Summit. He simply believes that the leaders are key. End note).

¶17. (C) Mazimhaka stated that when AU member states agreed to allow Sudan to host the Summit it was made clear that Sudan should not expect to chair the Assembly. Crucially, he said, Bashir lacks the moral authority to lead the AU and promote resolution of the continent's conflicts. Mazimhaka opined

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that member states need to do the right thing to preserve AU credibility, but was not convinced that logic would prevail. He pointed out that the AU Commission can lobby, but member states ultimately select the Chair.

¶18. (C) Comment: Per Ref B, Post is seeking meetings with key AU peace and security council members and will continue to probe on the issue of Assembly chairmanship. Post notes, though, that decisions will be made at the heads of state level, rendering valid Mazimhaka's advice to promote key African leader proactivity on the chairmanship issue. End comment.
HUDDLESTON